

Message Text

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ORIGIN COA-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CARACAS IMMEDIATE

INFO AMCONSUL CURACAO

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 240044

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TGEN, TBIO, PBOR, OCLR, VE, US

SUBJECT: RESEARCH VESSEL ATLANTIC II

1. ATLANTIC II, PRIVATE R/V OWNED AND OPERATED BY WOODS HOLE OCEANOGRAPHIC INSTITUTION HAS BEEN ON AN EXTENDED RESEARCH CRUISE OFF WEST AFRICA AND IN LAST TWO MONTHS IN CARIBBEAN AREA. CURRENTLY OFF VENEZUELA. DURING PRESENT LEG A II IS COLLECTING MICROBIOLOGICAL SAMPLES IN THE WATERS OVER AND THE SURFACE SEDIMENTS OF THE CARIOCA TRENCH FOR PURPOSE OF STUDYING BACTERIAL ACTIVITIES IN DEEP TRENCH.

2. VESSEL APPROACHED THIS MORNING BY VENEZUELAN NAVAL VESSEL PUERTO SANTOS (H-01), WARSHIP AND OCEANOGRAPHIC WORK, AND ORDERED TO DEPART QTE TERRITORIAL WATERS UNQTE. AT TIME A II WAS ABOUT 18 MILES SOUTH OF TORTUGA IS IN ABOUT 700 FATHOMS (OVER 1200 METERS). PUERTO SANTOS LATER GAVE A II 24 HOURS TO COMPLETE WORK BUT DIRECTOR WHOI HAS
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DIRECTED A II TO DEPART AREA IMMEDIATELY TO WORK IN AREA

EASTWARD OF TORTUGA CLEARLY OUTSIDE GOV JURISDICTION.

3. DEPT HAD ADVISED WHOI THAT CLEARANCE NOT RPT NOT REQUIRED FOR BOTTOM SAMPLING IN CARIOCA TRENCH ON BASIS
1) WATER DEPTH - USG TRADITIONALLY HAS NOT RPT NOT SOUGHT

PERMISSION FOR BOTTOM SAMPLING IN WATERS DEEPER THAN 200 METERS, AND 2) FACT THAT US R/V EASTWARD HAD WORKED CARIOCA TRENCH IN FEBRUARY (SEE DEPT A-11568 OF NOV 28, 1972) WITHOUT CLEARANCE. IN DOING SO, WE DID NOT RPT NOT ADDRESS ANOMOLY THAT VERY DEEP CARIOCA TRENCH COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY VENEZUELAN CONTINENTAL SHELF OF LESS THAN 200 METERS. BECAUSE OF LOS CONSIDERATIONS WE PREFER NOT RPT NOT ADDRESS THIS QUESTION AT PRESENT TIME. SUCH GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES VERY RARE. DEPT NOT RPT NOT AWARE GOV HAS MADE ANY CLAIMS TO TRENCH OR TO WATERS ABOVE IT MORE THAN TWELVE MILES OFFSHORE.

4. AS PLANNED, A II WOULD HAVE BEEN WORKING TRENCH AND EASTWARD OF TORTUGA FOR NEXT 4-5 DAYS BEFORE RETURNING TO WOODS HOLE. WHOI WOULD LIKE TO COMPLETE WORK IN TRENCH. WHOI WILL MAKE RESULTS AVAILABLE TO GOV WHOI HAPPY TO HAVE VENEZUELAN SCIENTIST JOIN A II FOR REMAINDER OF WORK IN AREA.

5. PROJECT IS PART OF COOPERATIVE INVESTIGATION OF CARIBBEAN AND ADJACENT REGIONS (CICAR) OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL OCEANOGRAPHIC COMMISSION AND CICAR PARTICIPANTS IN AREA GENERALLY AWARE OF WORK. CICAR OPERATIONS COORDINATOR TOM VAN'T HOF IN CURACAO REPORTED TO BE APPROACHING GOV CONSUL CURACAO AND GOV CICAR COORDINATOR CARLOS ATILANO G. IN ATTEMPT PERMIT A II CONTINUE TRENCH WORK. ATILANO IS NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES.

6. ACTION; EMBASSY REQUESTED TO ATTEMTP ALLOW A II CONTINUE WORK WITHOUT ADDRESSING JURISDICTION OR FORMAL CLEARANCE QUESTION. THIS MAY BE DONE THROUGH WHATEVER CHANNELS, FORMAL OR INFORMAL, EMBASSY CONSIDERS BEST. IN DUE COURSE EMBASSY ALSO REQUESTED TO REPORT ON 90 DAYS NOTICE PUERTO SANTOS REPORTED TO HAVE REFERRED TO IN CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMUNICATING WITH A II. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

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